

Roanoke, Town of  
(Smith Log House)  
County Route 23/5  
Roanoke Vicinity  
Lewis County  
West Virginia

HABS No. WV-209-S

HABS  
WVA,  
21-ROAN  
19-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

ROANOKE, TOWN OF  
(Smith Log House)

HABS No. WV-209-S

HABS  
WVA  
21-ROAN,  
19-

Location: West Virginia County Route 23/5, Lewis County, West Virginia.

Elevation: ca. 1080'.

UTM References as given on the National Register of Historic Places Nomination form:

Zone: 17

Easting: 543820

Northing: 4308440

U.S.G.S. Map: Roanoke, West Virginia, 7.5' (1966 edition, photo revised 1979).

Present Owner: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

Present Occupant: none.

Present Use: none.

Construction Date: mid-1800s.

Informants: Gordon Hall; Lawrence G. Smith.

Historical Information: Little is known about the three room Smith Log House. David W. Smith purchased the acreage on which it is located from Joseph Hall in 1859; however, no specific deed for this transaction has been found. Moreover, no information has been obtained on the construction date of the structure. David Smith was taxed as early as 1859 for improvements on a 30 acre tract; whether this assessment was levied on the structure in question is conjectural, although the inverted-vee log construction, the fine finishing detail displayed on the interior and the use of cut nails in its construction all combine to suggest that the dwelling dates before 1900. For its time, it was a well-crafted, even elegant although very small log residence.

The property remained in Smith family ownership for many years. In 1875, it came into the possession of Henry Radcliff Smith, with whose name it is locally associated. Before his death in 1915, Smith increased his holdings, and the tract grew into a parcel of ca. 175 acres (Lewis County Deed Book 86: 205). Smith and his wife had nine children, and it seems doubtful that he resided in the log dwelling for too long, if at all, while rearing his family. Informants have recalled that the dwelling was rented out by Smith; in fact, one former resident of Roanoke recollected that his parents resided in the structure for two years. During that period, his older sister was born in the 1880s (Gordon Hall 1981, pers. comm.). On this basis, it is safe to say that the Smith log dwelling/barn dates at least from that time period.

A descendant of Henry R. Smith has insisted that the structure was used as a tenant house on the Smith farm, but that it was not the Smith family dwelling, which no longer exists (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

A grandchild of Henry R. Smith recalled a visit that she made to the old house as a young girl in the mid-1940s. She remembered the house even then as long-abandoned,

TABLE

Ownership of Tract 1406

Grantor	Grantee	Date of Transaction	Cost	Acreage	Reference	Comments
Florence I. Nestor	Prentiss O. Cochran John J. Cochran Terry M. Cochran	18 March 1974	\$1,800.00	11	<u>Lewis County Deed Book 380: 207</u>	
Henry Wallace Nestor	Florence I. Nestor	11 April 1966		11	<u>Lewis County Will Book M: 607</u>	Florence Nestor was the widow of Henry W. Nestor
Sarah A. Nestor	Henry Wallace Nestor	1948				
Henry R. Smith	Sarah A. Nestor	19 April 1915		11	<u>Lewis County Deed Book 86: 199, 205</u>	Sarah Nestor received the land as part of the settlement of the Henry R. Smith estate
Lias G. Smith	H. R. Smith	14 April 1875	\$480.00	24	<u>Lewis County Deed Book 7: 558</u>	
David W. Smith & Amanda Smith (wife)	Lias G. Smith	9 April 1870	\$330.00	24 (Lot 10)	<u>Lewis County Deed Book 5: 263</u>	
Joseph Hall	David Smith	17 Oct. 1859		24		Circuit court suit involving Joseph Hall, plaintiff, and David Smith, defendant, resulted in the acqui- sition of 24 acres by David Smith. No deed transacted but refer- ence is made in <u>Deed Book 5: 263</u>

Table (cont.)

Grantor	Grantee	Date of Transaction	Cost	Acreage	Reference	Comments
John G. Duvall & Charity Duvall (wife)	Joseph Hall	24 Dec. 1857	\$770.00	55 1/2	Lewis County Deed Book T: 283	John Duvall was son of George T. Duvall and Polly Duvall
George T. Duvall & Polly Duvall (wife)	John G. Duvall	28 Oct. 1854	\$1.00	64	Lewis County Deed Book R: 252	1400 acre survey granted to John Duvall. Reference found in <u>Deed Book A: 261</u>
	John P. Duvall	13 May 1793		1400		

TABLE

Tax Record for Tract 1806

Name	Year	Land	Value per Acre	Value of Land	Value of Improvement	Total Value	Comments
David M. Smith	1860-1862	30 acres West Fork	\$5.00		\$100.00	\$150.00	
	1863	24 acres West Fork	\$8.00		\$100.00	\$192.00	
	1864-1865	30 acres West Fork	\$8.00			\$150.00	
	1866	24 acres West Fork	\$8.00			\$192.00	
	*1867-1870						
Lias G. Smith	1871-1874	25-P/25 acres West Fork	\$18.00	\$1800.00	\$200.00	\$453.00	Land valuation probably improperly recorded—possibly \$180.00
	1875	24 acres West Fork	\$10.00			\$240.00	
H. R. Smith	1876	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$11.00			\$264.00	From L. G. Smith
	1877-1880	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$11.00			\$264.00	
	1881-1882	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$10.00			\$240.00	
	1883	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$11.50			\$276.00	
	1884-1891	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$11.50			\$276.00	
	1892-1896	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$10.00			\$264.00	
	1897-1899	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$11.00			\$264.00	
	1900-1902	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$11.00			\$1,100.00	
	1903-1905	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$11.00			\$264.00	
	1906-1908	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$25.00			\$600.00	
	1909-1914	24 acres Buck Lick Run	\$30.00			\$720.00	
	1915-1916	11 acres West Fork	\$38.00			\$430.00	
	1917-1920	11 acres West Fork	\$25.00			\$270.00	
	1921-1922	11 acres West Fork	\$30.00		\$200.00	\$530.00	
Sarah A. Nester (sic)	1923-1927	11 acres West Fork	\$30.00	\$330.00		\$330.00	
	1928-1929	11 acres West Fork	\$27.00	\$300.00		\$300.00	
	1930	11 acres West Fork	\$25.00	\$270.00		\$270.00	
	1931	11 acres West Fork	\$20.00	\$220.00		\$220.00	
	1932-1948	11 acres West Fork	\$16.00	\$180.00		\$180.00	

Table (cont.)

Name	Year	Land	Value per Acre	Value of Land	Value of Improvement	Total Value	Comments
H. W. Nestor	1949-1967 1968-1970	11 acres West Fork 11 acres West Fork	\$16.00	\$180.00 \$520.00		\$180.00 \$520.00	
Florence Nestor	1971-1974	11 acres West Fork		\$520.00		\$520.00	
Prentiss O. Cochran, John J. Cochran Terry M. Cochran	1975 1976-1979	11 acres West Fork 11 acres West Fork		\$520.00 \$550.00		\$520.00 \$550.00	

\*Records Missing.

with sagging floors, broken windows and a creaking door; It was inhabited by squirrels who hid nuts in an old cupboard. She also has recalled a ramshackle "back" porch and faded, white-washed walls. Another area resident and family member noted that at one time there was a shed on "one side" of the old house (Lawrence G. Smith 1981, pers. comm.).

On the basis of this testimony, the Smith log dwelling/barn has probably not been used as a family dwelling since the early part of this century, it nonetheless has seen service in recent decades as a hay barn. In that time it has not been well-maintained. Its integrity largely has been retained although the structure is in a badly-deteriorated condition.

#### Architectural Information:

General Description: The Smith log dwelling/barn is a one and one-half story, one bay, two room, inverted vee-notched log structure with a gable roof.

It is similar in description to square log dwellings described by Glassie (1968b), Riedl, Ball and Cavender (1976) and Carlisle (1982) among others.

#### Exterior Description:

Overall Dimensions: 14'1" x 16'.

Foundation: The foundation consists of log sills that rest directly on grade.

Walls: The walls are composed of 1'-1'4" logs surfaced on their interior and exterior faces; corner timbering is of the inverted-vee or pentagonal type; on the gable ends, the area above the plate is enclosed with clapboards of variable widths attached to studs with cut nails. The southeast elevation of the structure preserves remnants of vertical board siding, while the northwest elevation retains some evidence of horizontal board siding. Both of these elevations also reveal the joists for the loft floor.

Porch: remnants of four 1" diameter pegs protrude from the logs 1'2" above present ground level on the southwest elevation. There are also three 3" x 3" notches in the log above the Room 1 to exterior door in the southwest elevation.

These may have previously supported some type of (probably shed) porch roof. The "front" of the structure might have been the southeast elevation. This may explain Lawrence G. Smith's (1981, pers. comm.) recollection of a shed on one side (i.e., the southwest side) where the so-called "porch" supports may represent the attachments of a shed roof addition. This interpretation also coincides with the "normal" floor plan for this structure type (Glassie 1968b).

Chimney: No chimney is extant, but there is evidence of a previous fireplace in Room 1 with a chimney centered in the northeast elevation.

Roof: The roof is a medium-pitch gable variety covered with corrugated sheet metal roofing; milled 2" x 4" rafters are used; eaves and raking trim are largely deteriorated, but remnants of a frieze board exist on the southwest and northwest elevations.

Originally, one or both of the doors in the northwest elevation may have been windows eventually enlarged into doorways leading into a possible addition to this elevation (see above).

Other: A four step ladder is attached to the southwest elevation to provide exterior access to the Room 2 to exterior doorway and the loft.

TABLE  
Tract 1406: Door Details

Position	Opening	Style	Hinge	Latch/Lock	Interior Surround Trim	Exterior Surround Trim	Threshold
Room 1 to Exterior (southeast)	3'3 1/2" x 5'6"	5 simple-beaded boards (5 3/4"-11") and 2 battens	wrought iron strap and pintle	wooden turn-button on interior	4" plain boards with 1 1/2" molding (Figure 553)	3 3/4" jambs 7" header	no
Room 1 to Exterior (southwest)	2'6" x 4'6"	door missing	—	remnants of thumb latch; wooden turn-button on interior	4 1/4" beaded boards	4" jambs; 7" header (Figure 546)	no
Room 2 to Exterior	2' 3/4" x 6'	door missing	—	—	3 1/2" boards	—	no
Room 2 to Room 3	6'4 1/2" x 6'6"	passageway	—	—	—	—	no



TABLE  
Tract 1406: Window Details

Position	Style	Opening	Size of Pane	Number of Panes	Type of Sill	Interior Surround Trim	Exterior Surround Trim
NORTHWEST WALL							
First Floor	missing	26" x 36"	—	—	—	4" mold (Figure 550)	—
NORTHEAST WALL							
Second Floor	double hung	23 1/4" x 29 1/4"	7 3/4" x 10"	2/2	—	2 3/4" simple-beaded boards	—

Interior Description: Room 1 (room numbers are keyed to floor plans on page 19)

Function: Unknown.

Dimensions: 12'9" x 14'6"; 5'8" ceiling.

Wallcovering: remnants of faded wallpaper cover 5"-1'1" simple-beaded vertical boards which previously had been white-washed; chair rail appears to have existed previously 2' above the floor; cut nails are used in the attachment of both the simple-beaded boards and the chair rail.

Floorcovering: 6"-8" plain boards attached with cut nails; unfinished.

Ceiling: exposed joists measure 3 1/4" x 5 1/2" and are on 2' 3/4"-22" centers; joists covered with beaded flooring (of Rooms 2 and 3); white-washed; bottom edges of joists are beaded; remnants of wallpaper are preserved; cut nails are used.

Baseboard: none.

Heating: none.

Fireplace: none at present, but an opening for what was probably a fireplace exists in northeast wall; see below.

Plumbing: none.

Lighting and Electricity: none.

Stairway: remnants of a stairway exist in the south corner of room; it appears to have made a right angle turn about one-half the way up to the loft floor; treads appear to have measured ca. 21" wide x 8 1/2" deep with a 10" rise; cut nails; painted white.

Other: A 6'6" wide x 4'4" high opening is centrally located along the base of the northeast wall where a fireplace probably once existed. The jambs, however, are similar to those in other window openings in the structure. The opening contains neither interior nor exterior surround.

Interior Description: Room 2

Function: Unknown.

Dimensions: 8'3" x 13'; 6'5" ceiling.

Wallcovering: 7"-1'1" beaded vertical boards on 27" high knee wall; 5"-1' 3/4" plain boards on gable ends; boards white-washed; cut nails.

Floorcovering: 2 1/2"-7 1/4" simple-beaded boards; cut nails; unfinished.

Ceiling: remnants of 5 1/2" simple-beaded boards; white-washed or painted white.

Baseboard: none.

Heating: none.

Fireplace: none.

Plumbing: none.

Lighting and Electricity: none.

Stairway: remains of a board-enclosed stairway are found in the south corner of the room. A simple octagonal newel post is also preserved.

Other: windbeams measuring 2 3/4" x 3 1/4" are set on 1'5" and 3'3" centers; simple-beaded; white-washed.

Interior Description: Room 3

Function: Unknown.

Dimensions: 6'8" x 13'; 6'5" ceiling.

Wallcovering: 7"-1'1" vertical boards on 27" high knee wall; 5"-1' 3/4" plain boards on gable ends; boards white-washed; cut nails.

Floorcovering: 2 1/2"-7 1/4" simple-beaded boards; unfinished; cut nails.  
Ceiling: remnants of 5 1/2" simple-beaded boards; white-washed.  
Baseboard: none.  
Heating: none.  
Fireplace: none.  
Plumbing: none.  
Lighting and Electricity: none.  
Other: windbeams measuring 2 3/4" x 3 1/4" are set on 1'10" and 3'3 1/2" centers; simple-beaded ; white-washed.

**Site:**

General Setting and Orientation: The Smith log House is situated on top of a hill above the West Fork River ca. 3/4 mile from Roanoke, West Virginia, on the east side of West Virginia County Route 23/5 (the old Weston and Gauley Bridge Turnpike).

Historic Landscape Design: The structure most recently has been used as a barn, but vestiges of prior landscaping are visible; a locust (*Robinia* sp.) tree stands at the east corner of the dwelling and is heavily covered by poison ivy (*Rhus* sp.) vines as is the northeast side of the structure ; another locust (*Robinia* sp.) tree grows ca. 39' northwest of the building; tiger (*Lilium tigrinum*) or day (*Lilium* sp.) lillies are scattered around the property close to the dwelling; the structure currently stands in the midst of a hay field.

Outbuildings: none.

For project information and bibliography, see ROANOKE HABS No. WV-209.  
For other structures in the Roanoke area, see HABS No.s WV-209-A -R.

The report from which this HABS documentation was prepared, along with field notes and over 90 hours of interview tapes, will be archived at the University of West Virginia, Morgantown, West Virginia.



Perspective control photograph of the southwest elevation of the Smith log  
House in 1981. Note ladder to loft.



Close-up of Room 2 to  
exterior doorway in southwest eleva-  
tion of the Smith log House in  
1981



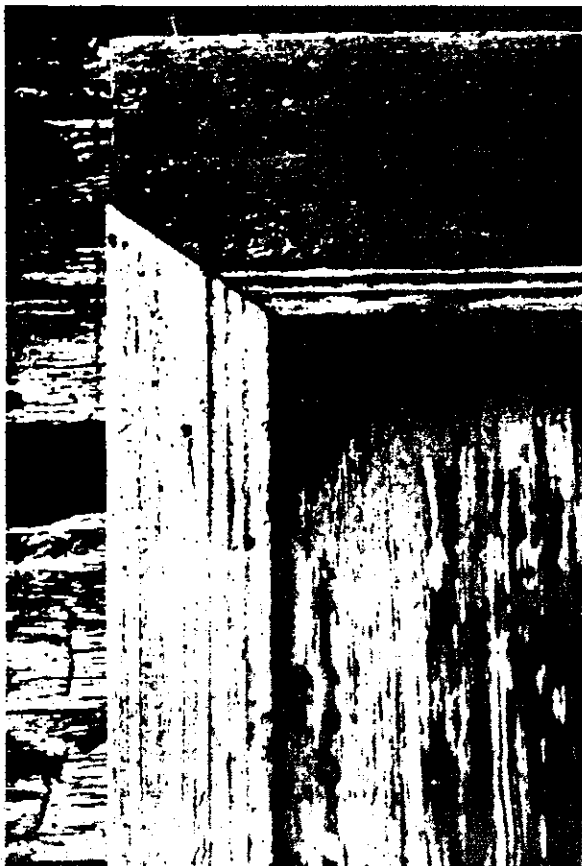
Perspective control photograph of the southwest and southeast elevations of the Smith log House in 1981.



Close-up of the south corner of the Smith log House in 1981. Note the inverted-vee notching technique as well as the tenons in the center log. These may represent the remains of a previous porch roof on the southwest elevation.



Close-up of inverted-vee  
corner timbering at the south corner  
of the Smith log House in 1981.



Close-up of exterior sur-  
round trim or architrave on the Room  
1 to exterior door of the Smith log  
House.



Perspective control photograph of the vine-covered northeast elevation of the Smith log House.



Close-up of the east corner of the Smith log House.

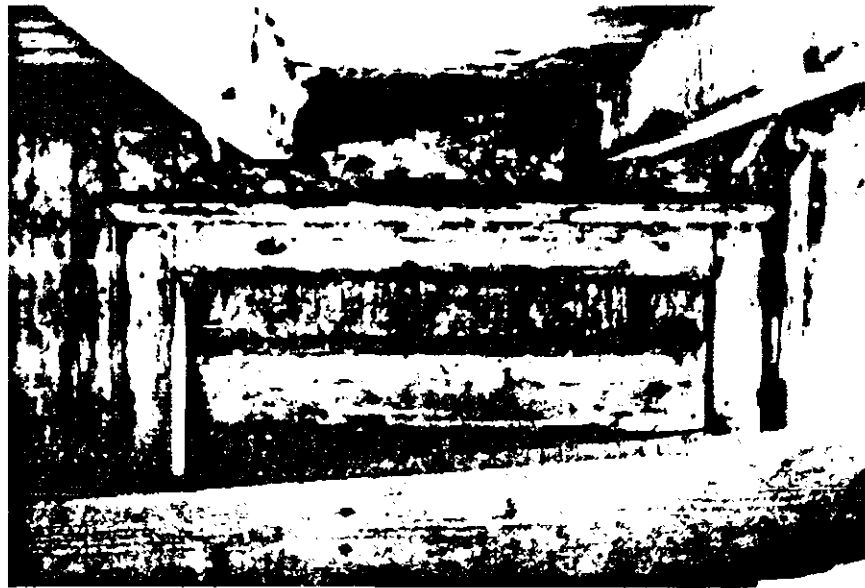


Interior of Room 1 of the Smith log House in 1981 looking north.  
Note the vertical simple-beaded boards that cover the walls of this room.



Interior of Room 1 of the Smith log House in 1981 looking  
northeast. The large opening in the northeast wall marks the location of the fireplace.





Close-up of interior of Room 1 to exterior board and batten door in the southeast elevation of the Smith log House in 1981. Note the beaded ceiling beams



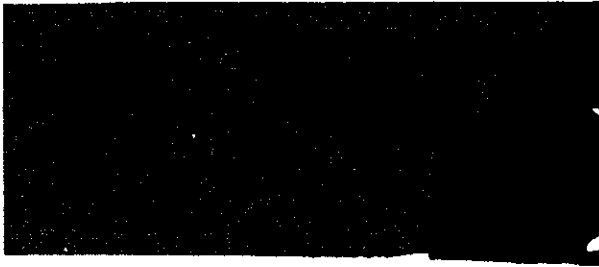
Close-up of collapsing stairway in south corner of Room 1 of the Smith log House in 1981



Close-up of collapsing  
stairway, newel post and stair enclosure in south corner of Room 2 of the  
Smith log House .



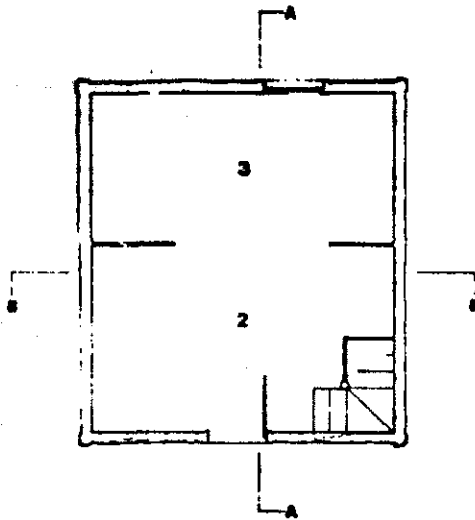
Close-up of stair newel post and stair enclosure in the south corner of Room  
2 of the Smith log House.



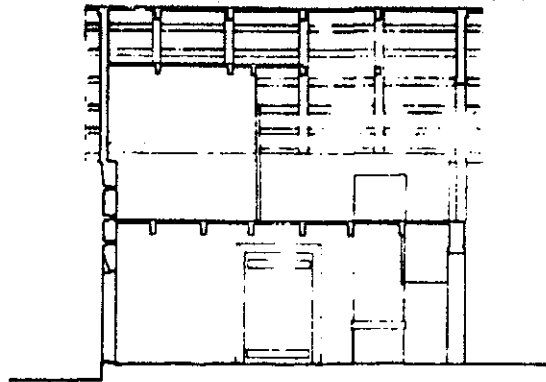
Loft Rooms 2 and 3 of the  
Smith log House in 1981 look-  
ing northeast .



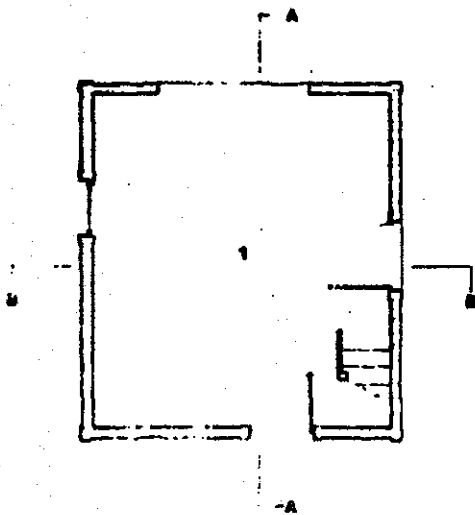
Loft Rooms 2 and 3 of the  
Smith log House in 1981 look-  
ing north-northeast. Note the horizon-  
tal boards



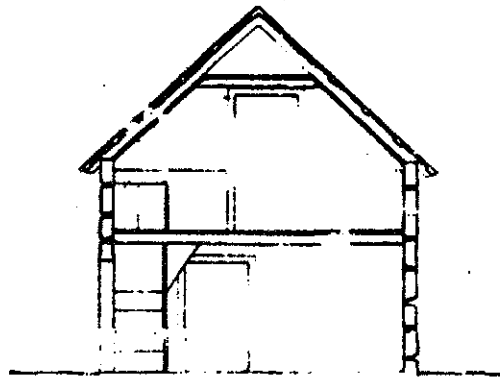
SECOND FLOOR PLAN



SECTION A-A

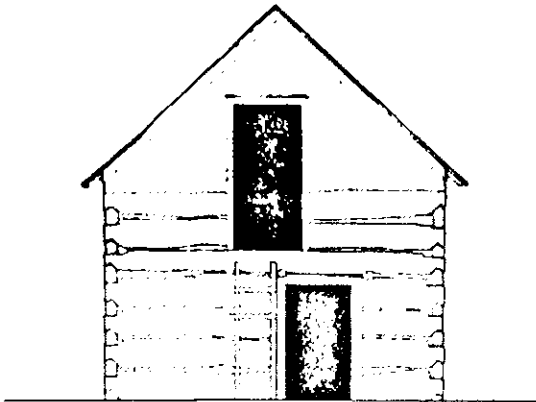


FIRST FLOOR PLAN

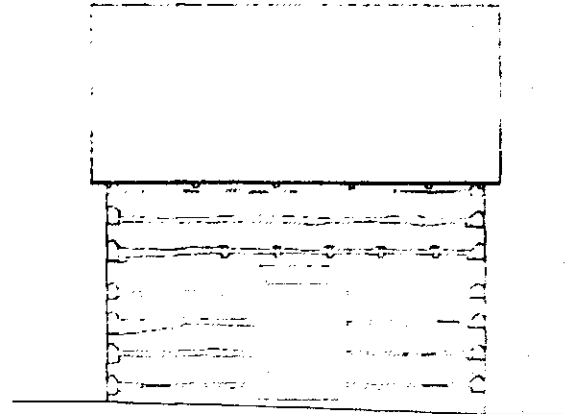


SECTION B-B

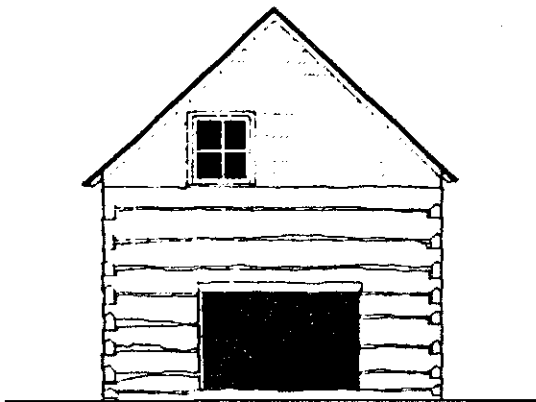
First and second floor (left) plans, longitudinal (A-A) and transverse (B-B) sections of the Smith Log House. A now missing door in the southwest elevation (Room 1 to Exterior) is not shown.



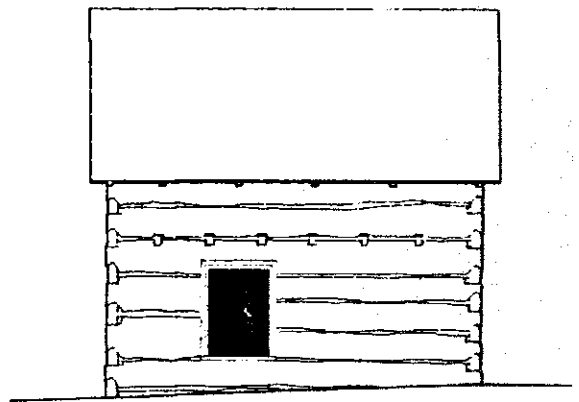
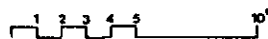
SOUTHWEST ELEVATION



SOUTHEAST ELEVATION

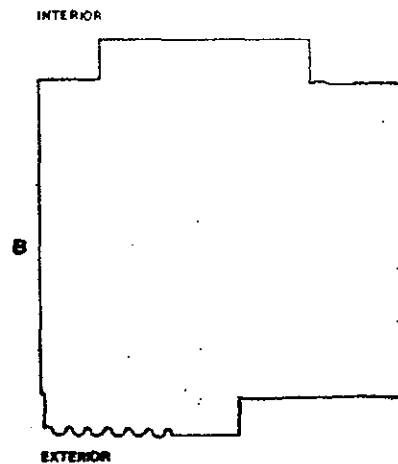
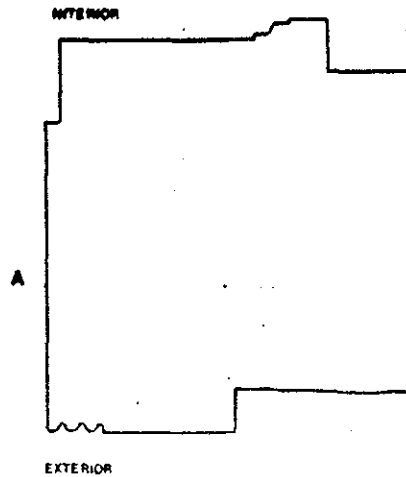
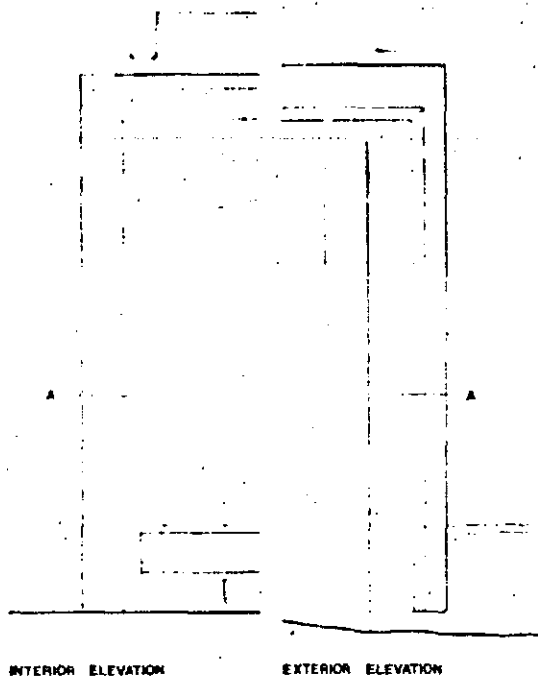


NORTHEAST ELEVATION

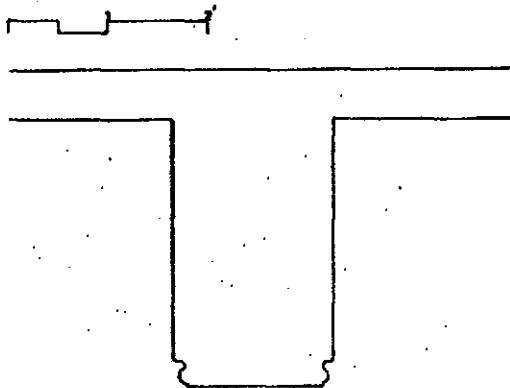


NORTHWEST ELEVATION

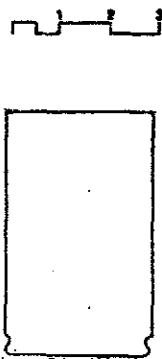
Southwest, southeast, northeast, northwest elevations of the Smith  
log House.



TYPICAL DOOR DETAILS



TYPICAL DOOR MOLDINGS



Typical door details, door molding and ceiling beam details  
of the Smith log House.